

Citizens must nix adding morality to city charter

Moses found his crusade on Mount Sinai. A new Moses has found his crusade in Corpus Christi.

Rex Moses has devoted his life to anti-abortion causes and has created the "Body of Christ Rescue" organization in the city whose name is Latin for "body of Christ." This Moses, while as committed to his cause as the biblical man, encourages other protestors to break or to circumvent the law in their attempts to stop abortions in Nueces County.

Now, Corpus Christi residents must vote on a city charter amendment declaring that human life begins at conception. Though well-intentioned, the amendment, which would be added in a preamble, must be voted down. It calls on the city to support a moral value that violates the separation of church and state and bears no legal weight in the pro-lifers' fight against abortions.

At stake in the January vote is not whether abortions can be performed in Nueces County, but whether a moral conviction can be placed in a city's legal charter. The objectionable passage in the amendment says "human life begins at conception and extends to the moment of natural death." This

Lisa Ann Robertson
Of The Battalion Staff

statement is a personal belief neither proved nor disproved by scientific facts. Not everyone accepts the theory that life begins when sperm and egg meet.

I do not mean to imply that only facts can bring about change or that the petitioners who secured the vote are irrational in their belief. On the contrary, I commend them for trying to go through legal channels to affect change. At a time when convictions seem to be lacking in society, it is refreshing to find people who fight for their beliefs. However, I am afraid that this time their emotions have tricked them into thinking that the amendment belongs in the city charter. Residents can create organizations to promote their beliefs, but they can not use the city charter as their organizational tool.

Toward a legal surgical procedure, theirs is a moral attitude. *Roe vs. Wade* made abortions a legal option for pregnant women. Protestors to this

option must make their opinions known to legislators to change the law. Protestors must not, however, impose their opinions in a document that outlines the structure of a city.

A city charter issues no opinions on any matter. It lists what the legal system considers unlawful activities, but it does not list what the legal system considers "morally questionable" activities. The city functions as an entity to create and enforce rules and to facilitate commerce for its residents. The city makes laws, not moral judgments, and the city charter has no room for a preamble that purports such a judgment.

The separation of church and state is intended to provide governmental stability by forcing religious multiplicity on the nation. By placing the amendment in the city charter, abortion opponents jeopardize that stability. Even though the amendment cites no religious affiliation, its tone relies heavily upon church rhetoric to suggest that any who oppose the amendment are in favor of "killing babies."

I am not saying that all people who support the amendment are zealots or that they all support it for religious reasons. But Corpus Christi is a

predominantly Catholic city. I believe it is only natural for some residents to assume the amendment should go into the charter because they think everyone follows the Catholic church's stance on abortion. They probably do not realize that the city, as a legal entity, is not and can not be Catholic or any other denomination.

Let me repeat that the issue here is neither the morality of abortion nor the pro-lifers' opposition to it. The issue is the appropriateness of a city charter amendment that bears no legal weight on the ability of women to obtain abortions in Corpus Christi. Even amendment supporters realize that a victory in the voting booth does not mean a victory against abortion, but they justify the vote by saying:

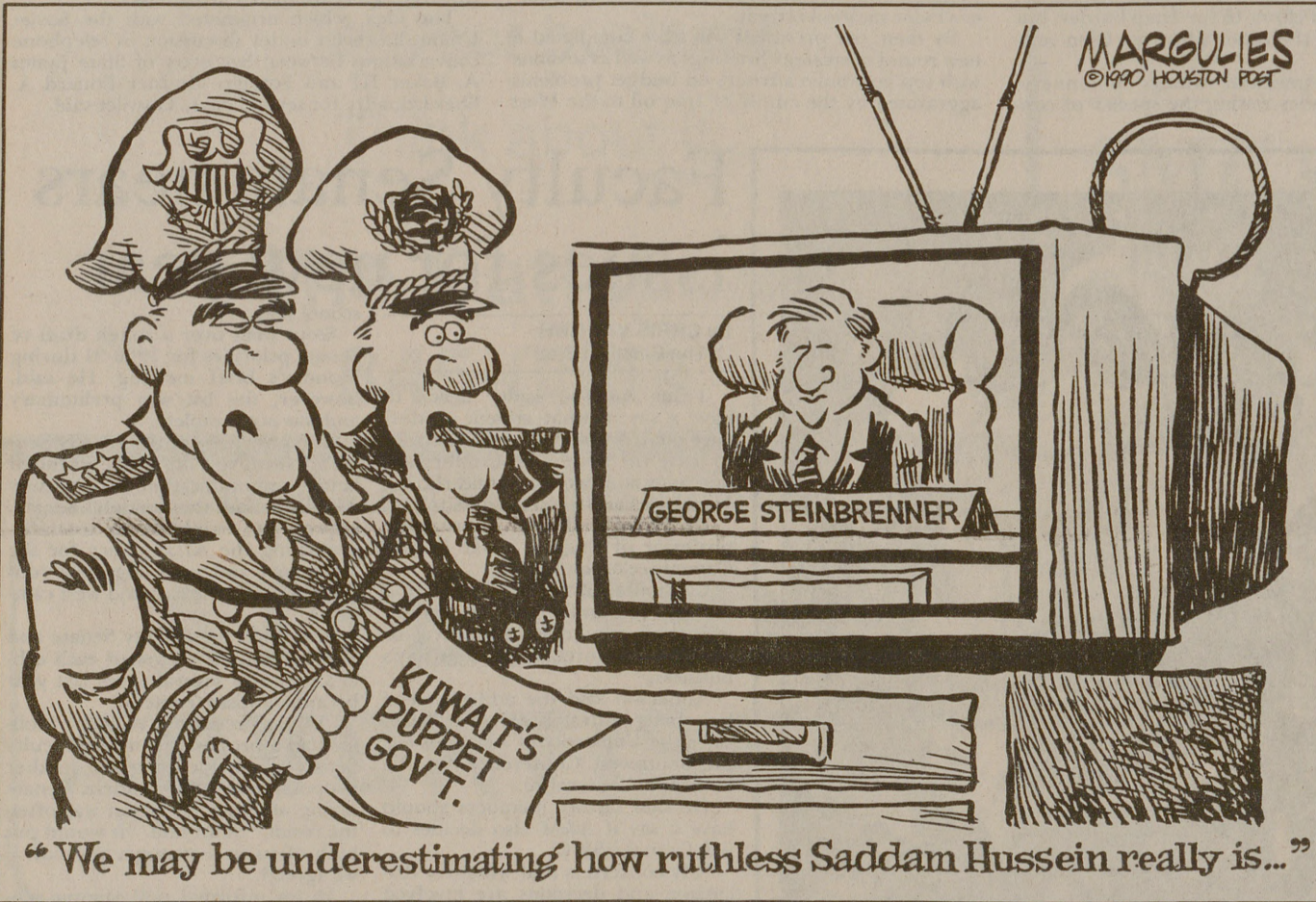
"We will be making a statement as a community that we respect human life in all stages," Trudy Cassidy said in a Houston Chronicle article (July 29, 1990). Cassidy is the chairwoman of the Human Family Committee which led the petition drive for the January amendment vote. But I wonder, do we all agree what the stages of human life are?

The statement is being placed before

the wrong people. If voted into the charter, the statement will produce a legal change. If Cassidy's committee is serious about change, then the statement should be placed before state representatives from the Corpus Christi area. If taken to Austin, the statement has the potential to produce a change determining if and when an abortion could take place in Texas. Using the statement as the will of the people, representatives like Carlos Truan and enlist fellow legislators to restrict Texas abortion laws. Unfortunately, petitioners are wasting voters' time by putting a legally moot issue on the ballot.

While I applaud the petitioners for their peaceful efforts, I will not support their moot amendment. I cannot support an amendment that violates the separation of church and state and makes a moral generalization for everyone. Corpus Christi residents must not support this amendment, even if Moses does.

Lisa Ann Robertson is a senior journalism major.



Voters should forgive Williams for old joke

I hear it more and more. Every time the topic of the governor's race comes up, I hear some woman yelling in the background. What are they yelling about? They are yelling about a JOKE Republican candidate Clayton Williams made several months ago.

Everybody knows the one. When referring to the weather Williams compared it to rape. He said, "If it's inevitable, just sit back, relax and enjoy it."

Granted, that's not a nice thing to say about rape, but it was just a JOKE.

So now, whenever the governor's race is brought up and Clayton Williams name is mentioned, some woman will scream that Williams should be shot, or have some part of his anatomy cut off.

Isn't that a little extreme for a JOKE? If this happened every time a comedian mentioned something that is taboo with someone else, there would be no comedians.

When referring to the weather Williams compared it to rape. Granted, that's not a nice thing to say about rape, but it was just a joke.

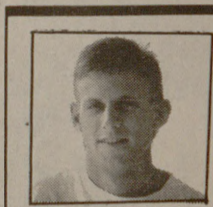
Now, I know that Williams is no comedian. And I know that running for governor is a big thing. But I don't think Williams should be condemned to hell for it.

If I were to tell a joke like the one Williams told (and I do think it was funny, just as a JOKE) I most likely would not be given a second glance.

If you think that having a sense of humor will affect the way he would run the governor's office, then don't vote for him.

If you think that he has no sense of humor and you just don't like him, then don't vote for him. Just stop all the hysteria.

Why is it that women are the only ones I hear yelling about this? Why don't men condemn Williams too? Maybe it's because they think it's funny but they don't want to admit it, so they



Colin Moss
Columnist

just keep their mouth shut.

Or perhaps all men are sexist, just as Williams has been labeled by many. Maybe, since men are not as likely to be raped, it's not that big of a deal.

In any case, I wish women would just calm down when it comes to Williams. It's not like he raped anyone.

Williams also admitted he visited a whorehouse as a college student here at Texas A&M. That was apparently the 'thing to do' for many of the cadets at the time. I suppose he should be condemned to hell for that too.

For heaven's sake, soliciting prostitutes and making jokes. What a crime!

Ann Richards, the Democratic candidate for governor, has been accused of doing drugs, but you never hear anyone complaining about that. "Oh, god! Drugs!" She should be executed for that."

The reason you never hear anything about it is because it's not that big of a deal. Just like the William's joke: No deal.

So the campaign should restart on a clean slate, right?

Wrong. Richards is now accusing Williams of running for office just to keep his businesses going. So the mudslinging has begun again and we get to just sit back, relax and enjoy it.

Now, I'm not saying Williams should be elected governor and I'm not saying that Richards ought to be elected either. I really don't care because I will be living in another state by the time of the election, I hope.

I just think we ought to stop worrying about the past of the candidates and start worrying about the future of our state.

Colin Moss is a senior journalism and speech communication major.

Let's go back to singing the old rugged hymns

I was reading that church attendance is on the decline in the United States. I can give several reasons for that myself. Saturday night is one reason.

Another is the great movies Ted Turner's Superstation shows on cable Sunday mornings during church hours.

It's the 10:35 Eastern slot. There are old movies, classic movies, like "In Harm's Way," with John Wayne and, a personal favorite, "Zula Dawn," where about six zillion Zulu warriors come running and screaming over a hill and kill Burt Lancaster.

And there's one more reason why I think a lot of people — and I am certainly included — don't go to church as often as they once did.

It's church music. something has happened to it since I left Moreland Methodist, the church so dear to my childhood.

There was in my youth a wonderful

Lewis Grizzard
Syndicated Columnist

thing known as the Cokesbury Hymnal.

Many were worn and dogeared from years of use. Steve Bohannon led the singing at my hometown church, and the old hymns we sang have never left the part of my heart they touched.

They rarely sing any of those old hymns when I go to church nowadays. I went to another Methodist church a few weeks ago. No Cokesbury hymnals, and a woman in the choir got up and sang what sounded like something from an opera and hurt my ears.

In the middle of it all, I wanted to stand up and shout, like Steve Bohannon, "Beulah Land! - first and

last verses," but I didn't. They probably would have called the cops.

I mentioned my fondness for the old hymns and the fact I wanted "Precious Memories" played at my funeral to my stepbrother, Ludlow Porch, the famous radio star.

"What do you want them to play at your funeral?" I asked Ludlow.

He thought for a moment and then answered, "Volleyball."

At the bottom of all this probably lies the fact that big city churches have all become too sophisticated to sing the old songs.

They have huge choirs and expensive organs with monstrous pipes and they have ministers of music, some with Ph.Ds.

At Moreland Methodist, and old piano played the dear, sweet music. Our minister of music, Steve Bohannon, incidentally, ran a service station.

The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference Associated Collegiate Press

The Battalion Editorial Board

Monique Threadgill, Editor

Melissa Naumann, Managing Editor

Damon Arhos, Opinion Page Editor

Holly Becka, City Editor

Meg Reagan, Lisa Ann Robertson, News Editors

Clay Rasmussen, Sports Editor

Eric Roalson, Art Director

Todd Stone, Lifestyles Editor

Editorial Policy

The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion is published Tuesday through Friday during Texas A&M summer semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

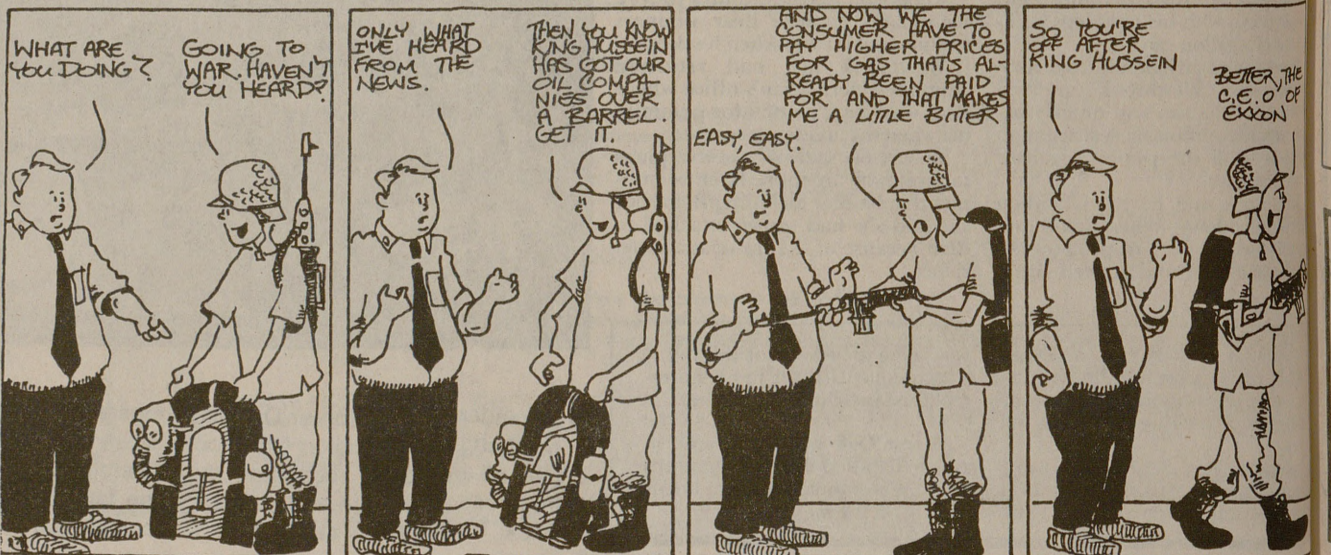
Mail subscriptions are \$20 per semester, \$40 per school year and \$50 per full year: 845-2611. Advertising rates furnished on request: 845-2696.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111. Newsroom: 845-3313.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4111.

FAX



by Brett Bridgeman

The Battalion
2ST
Wednesday,
Exo
to se
By ELIZABETH T.
Of The Battalion
Other than hav
Ruffus is a 15-
tiger whose own
\$1,000.
Betsy Henders
the College of Ve
is searching for
care of Ruffus be
large cats require
and energy. Alon
owns a jaguar n
leopard named Su
"I love these typ
said. "I have alwa
work with exotic a
Before coming
Police
of Colle
Brazos County
seeking informati
burglary south of
Someone broke
down of an apartm
south of College
day of Thursday,
The person(s)
apartment, ransac
and stole electron
jewelry valued
\$12,000.
A Magnavox te
an Emerson vide
a Samsung micro
7000 camera and
order were amor
Investigators ro
son(s) probably
haul all the items
vehicle probably
conspicuous spot
glary.
Due to the pre
burglaries and th
task of having po
neighborhood are
Fami
for 'C
J.E. Loupot gr
his 80th birthd
By KATHY COX
Of The Battalion
J.E. "Old Ar
brated his 80th
Williams Jr. Alu
Loupot's fam
party for him,
cake and Aggie
Judson Loup
celebrate the m
his father.
"We wanted t
son said. "He's
ing another. Th
Another part
owns three book
But Judson sa
ter family and fr
An arch cover
with the A&M I
A
M
P
M
CLINICS
10% Stu
846-4756
3820 Texas
next to Randy Sim